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to a sender that the user is using or in proximity to any particular communications device. Further, Staples fails to provide an indication of the location of the user to the sender. In particular, the actual location of the user is masked from a sender in order to provide "virtual presence" in the office. Hence, Staples facilitates contacting a device in a home office.

The presently claimed invention distinguishes Staples by facilitating instant communication with a person, rather than a device, if the person wishes to be contacted. In order to instantly contact a user it is desirable to have an indication of which device the user is most likely to have at hand and be inclined to use, which may be at least partially dependent on the location of the user. As discussed in the specification, presence information and context may be automatically gathered (Page 8, lines 3-7, 17-20). For example, events such as logging onto the Internet, moving between wireless cells, remote logins and keyboard presses may be monitored to determine presence (Page 10, lines 4-7). It should be apparent at this point that the term "presence" as used in this application indicates more than a "working at home today" flag. In particular, presence indicates either that a device is currently in use by a user or that there is information tending to indicate that a device is readily at hand to the user. Some presence information is provided to a caller (Page 8, lines 18-20) in accordance with predefined rules to select means for contacting the user. These points of distinction are reflected in the claims. For example, claim 1 distinguishes the cited reference by reciting **determining presence information for the watched party including identifying which of said different devices are in active communication with the multiple access network ... selecting one of the plurality of contact addresses associated with at least one device determined to be in active communication with the multiple access network as an address for contacting the watched party.** It should be noted that devices such as fax machines which are illustrated by way of

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example in Staples are not normally in active communication with a network. Rather, a fax is passively connected with a network such as the PSTN and is in active communication only when sending or receiving. In contrast, a computer, PDA, mobile phone and some other devices are normally in active communication when connected to a network because status, keep-alive and other messages are periodically exchanged with nodes in the network, even if a user is not actively using the device. It should also be noted that a fax is not a practical device for instant two-way communication. Turning again to the claims, claim 13 distinguishes Staples by reciting **wherein said plurality of gateways are configured to provide said processor with information pertaining to a presence of said watched party on said plurality of access networks, including which of the devices is currently in active communication with at least one of the access networks.** Similarly, claim 22 distinguishes Staples by reciting **gateway means coupled between said processor means and said plurality of access networks for providing said processor with information pertaining to a presence of said watched party on said plurality of access networks, including which of the devices is in active communication with at least one of said access networks.** For the reasons stated above, Applicant requests that the rejections of claims 1, 13 and 22 be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2-12, 14-21 and 23-43 recite further distinguishing features. Further, the dependent claims are allowable for the reasons already stated with regard to claims 1, 13 and 22. Consequently, Applicant requests that the rejections of claims 2-12, 14-21 and 23-43 be withdrawn.

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Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Holmes W. Anderson, Applicants' Attorney at 978-264-6664 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date


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CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of communicating with a watched party over a multiple access network comprising:

providing said watched party with a contact identifier;

storing a plurality of contact addresses for said watched party in a common location which is accessible via said multiple access network, each contact address being associated with a corresponding plurality of different devices and having different values;

receiving a request from a watching party to contact said watched party, wherein said request includes said contact identifier;

determining presence information for the watched party including identifying which of said different devices are in active communication with the multiple access network;

selecting one of the plurality of contact addresses associated with at least one device identified as being in active communication with the multiple access network as an address for contacting the watched party, the step of selecting operating in response to a watched party defined contact rule, the watched party defined contact rule associating watched party presence and user preferences with each of the plurality of contact numbers; and

selectively forwarding the selected contact address to the watching party to enable the watching party to contact the watched party at the selected contact address in response to the watched party contact rules, whereby quickly contacting the watched party may be facilitated and controlled.

2. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, providing a contact address and a description of said at least one device to a the watching party.

3. (original) The method according to Claim 2 further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, said watching party providing said contact address and said description of said at least one device with said request.

4. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

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determining that said watched party is accessible via a plurality of devices;
contacting said watched party via at least one of said plurality of devices based upon said set of watched party defined contact rules.

5. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 4 further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, providing a contact address and a description of said at least one device to a the watching party.

6. (original) The method according to Claim 5 further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, said watching party providing said contact address and said description of said at least one device with said request.

7. (original) The method according to Claim 6 further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, providing a contact address and a respective description of said plurality of devices to said watching party.

8. (original) The method according to Claim 7 further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, said watching party providing said contact address and said description of at least one of said plurality of devices with said request.

9. (original) The method according to Claim 2 further comprising determining a contextual situation of a watched party and providing a description of said contextual situation to said watching party.

10. (original) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

converting said contact identifier into at least one of said plurality of contact addresses prior to contacting said watched party.

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11. (original) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising converting said contact identifier into a plurality of said plurality of contact addresses prior to contacting said watched party.

12. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

controlling access to said determination that said watched party has access to said multiple access network via said at least one device based upon said watched party defined contact rules.

13. (currently amended) A system for communicating with a watched party over a multiple access network comprising:

a processor coupled to said multiple access network;

C¹ wherein said processor is configured to store contact information for contacting said watched party via a plurality of access networks, the contact information including a plurality of different contact numbers corresponding to the plurality of devices associated with at least two different access networks;

at least one watched party defined contact rule stored in said processor the watched party defined contact rule associating watched party presence and user preferences with each of the plurality of contact numbers;

a plurality of gateways coupled between said processor and said plurality of access networks;

wherein said plurality of gateways are configured to provide said processor with information pertaining to a presence of said watched party on said plurality of access networks, including which of the devices is currently in active communication with at least one of the access networks; and,

wherein said processor is configured to select one of the contact addresses for forwarding to a watching party seeking access to the watched party in response to the watched party defined contact rules.

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14. (previously amended) The system according to Claim 13 further comprising a plurality of watched party defined contact rules stored in said processor.

15. (original) The system according to Claim 13 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one destination address of said watching party for contacting said watched party via at least one of said access networks.

16. (original) The system according to Claim 13 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one device type for contacting said watching party.

17. (original) The system according to Claim 16 wherein:

said device type is selected from the group consisting of telephone, facsimile, pager, e-mail system, and video conference system.

18. (original) The system according to Claim 15 wherein:

said subset of said contact information comprises a contact identifier which is convertible by said processor into at least one contact address for said watched party.

19. (original) The system according to Claim 18 wherein said contact identifier comprises a telephone number.

20. (original) The system according to Claim 18 wherein said contact identifier comprises a data network address.

21. (previously amended) The system according to claim 13 wherein said processor is configured to limit access to a watching party to at least one set of contact information based upon said at least one watched party defined contact rule.

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22. (currently amended) A system for communicating with a watched party over a multiple access network comprising:

processor means coupled to said multiple access network, for storing contact information for contacting said watched party via a plurality of devices associated with at least two access networks, the contact information including a plurality of contact addresses associated with the plurality of devices access networks;

at least one watched party defined contact rule stored in said processor means, the watched party defined contact rule associating watched party presence and user preferences with each of the plurality of contact numbers;

gateway means coupled between said processor means and said plurality of access networks for providing said processor with information pertaining to a presence of said watched party on said plurality of access networks, including which of the devices is in active communication with at least one of said access networks; and,

wherein said processor means is further configured to provide select one of the plurality of contact addresses to a watching party seeking access to the watched party in response to a watching party request and the watched party defined contact rules.

23. (previously amended) The system according to Claim 22 further comprising:

a plurality of watched party defined contact rules stored in said processor means.

24. (original) The system according to Claim 22 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one destination address of said watching party for contacting said watched party via at least one of said access networks.

25. (original) The system according to Claim 22 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one device type for contacting said watching party.

26. (original) The system according to Claim 25 wherein:

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said device type is selected from the group consisting of telephone, facsimile, pager, e-mail system, and video conference system.

27. (original) The system according to Claim 22 wherein:

a subset of said contact information comprises a contact identifier which is convertible by said processor means into at least one contact address for said watched party.

28. (original) The system according to Claim 27 wherein:

said contact identifier comprises a telephone number.

29. (original) The system according to Claim 27 wherein:

said contact identifier comprises a data network address.

C/ 30. (previously amended) The system according to Claim 22 wherein said processor means is configured to limit access to a watching party to at least one set of contact information based upon said at least one watched party defined contact rule.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, automatically determining a location of said watched party.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the location of said watched party is automatically determined based at least in part on recent use of said at least one device.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the location of said watched party is automatically determined based at least in part on recent use of said at least one device.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein at least one of said plurality of contact addresses is associated with said at least one device.

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35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of selecting one of said contact addresses based at least in part on said set of watched party defined contact rules.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of selecting a contact address associated with a device, that is not at the automatically determined location of the watched party.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of selecting a contact address associated with a device that is at the automatically determined location of the watched party.

C1 38. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
prior to contacting said watched party, determining a location of said watched party based on a plurality of sources.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the plurality of sources comprises the at least one device that said watched party uses to access said multiple access network.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, further comprising
prior to contacting said watched party, accessing a stored information about said watched party in the at least one device.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 40, further comprising
prior to contacting said watched party, determining the location of said watched party based on the stored information in the at least one device.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising
prior to contacting said watched party, accessing a location information of said watched party in the watched party defined contact rules.

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43. (previously presented) The method of claim 42, further comprising:

C1 prior to contacting said watched party, determining a location of said watched party based on the location information found in the watched party defined contact rules.
